



Opportunity Rising

Annual Report 2017

Our Mission

School's Out Washington (SOWA) provides services and guidance for organizations to ensure all young people have safe places to learn and grow when not in school. SOWA is dedicated to building community systems to support quality afterschool, youth development and summer programs for Washington's children and youth ages 5 through young adulthood.



In 2017, SOWA held its first ever Refugee Youth Convening, a week-long summer program for refugee high school youth from across South King County. Students from all over the world engaged in learning exploring themes connecting to their resettlement experiences and opportunities to participate in art, dance, poetry, and photography taught by teaching artists.

Dear Community,

The momentum is rising, and we are on our way to closing one of the lesser known yet truly egregious opportunity gaps facing children and youth across Washington State: consistent access to high-quality and culturally responsive learning opportunities afterschool and in the summer.

One day soon, youth in poverty, youth of color, and youth in rural areas will have ample opportunities to develop their voice, grow their skills, and strengthen their pathway to college and career through enriching and high-quality expanded learning programs. When that day comes, we have no doubt that we will look back on 2017 as a pivotal year in the journey to get there.

In 2017, we felt the momentum swell with unprecedented recognition of the value of expanded learning opportunities in our state. We saw new and groundbreaking investments into high-quality expanded learning from the state legislature, King County's Best Starts for Kids, and the Wallace Foundation in Tacoma. This was also the year that our President threatened to eliminate the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the only major federal support of afterschool programs, and the outcry was so great that Congress actually increased funding for the program.

With the leadership of School's Out Washington, opportunities continue to rise for young people across Washington State. We invite you to read more about our journey this past year, and join us as we continue to move forward impactful and groundbreaking work in the coming year.

With gratitude,



Elizabeth Whitford CEO



Ceil Erickson Board President





“SOWA serves a critical role elevating the importance of quality when it comes to supporting the expanded learning field in delivering meaningful experiences that lead to real results for kids. We rely on SOWA to bring their expertise to our expanded learning initiatives and look forward to deepening our partnership in the coming years.”

— Kathi Littmann, President & CEO, Greater Tacoma Community Foundation



Expanding Opportunities Across Washington

At SOWA, we are committed to supporting youth, organizations, and system leaders across Washington State as we work to strengthen access to quality expanded learning opportunities.

This past year, we took big leaps forward in advancing an initiative to build a publicly-financed training and quality-improvement system for expanded learning programs, and launching regional offices in Pierce and Spokane counties. We now have staff providing on the ground support in these regions to afterschool and summer learning providers, and strengthening relationships with our many partners critical to supporting the holistic development of young people both in and out of school.





Expanded Learning Opportunities Quality Initiative

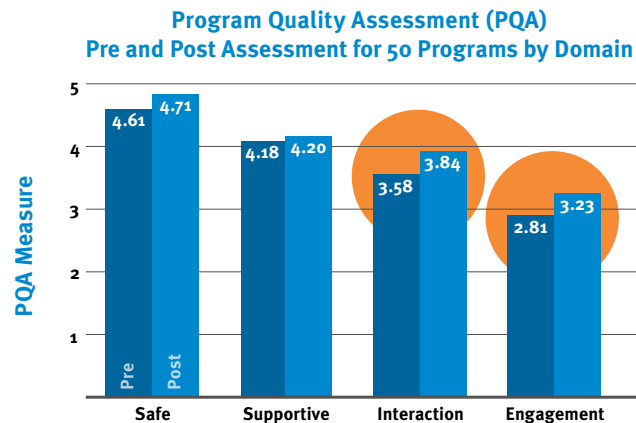
SOWA's expansion builds on a groundbreaking initiative launched during the 2016–2017 school year to test the impact of quality programs in helping youth achieve positive outcomes. The *Expanded Learning Opportunities Quality Initiative*, a public-private partnership between the Raikes Foundation, Washington State Department of Early Learning, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, University of Washington Cultivate Learning, Child Care Aware, Child Care Resources, Community-Minded Enterprises, and SOWA engaged 50 programs from King, Pierce, Spokane, and Walla Walla counties in a year-long quality intervention process.

Research evaluation conducted by University of Washington Cultivate Learning confirmed SOWA's coaching and quality improvement supports link directly to improved program quality, and that **as the quality increased, programs experienced higher levels of youth engagement** and fewer challenging behaviors.

With an investment from the Washington State Legislature, the initiative has continued into this current school year, bringing quality training and supports to 60 programs.

Youth Program Registry

Telling the story of the expanded learning field is critical in building public will to advance program quality and access for young people. The Youth Program Registry (youthprogramregistry.org) launched in 2017 is a central database to collect information on expanded learning programs and professionals. SOWA has worked to populate the Registry and in the coming year, will be able to pull data and use the Registry to help tell the story of expanded learning to garner support from policymakers, funders, and other key stakeholders for the benefit of youth.



ELO Quality Initiative participating programs showed improvement in all four domains, with significant growth in the interaction and engagement domains, the primary focus of the intervention. *Expanded Learning Opportunities Quality Initiative Report to the Legislature, September 30, 2017. Submitted by: WA State Department of Early Learning & Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction*

LOOKING FORWARD

SOWA is leading efforts with our partners to lay the foundation for a major state investment in a new statewide quality improvement system for expanded learning in Washington. SOWA will also deepen our focus on social emotional learning and promoting the role of expanded learning opportunities to develop these skills for young people partnering with schools to create seamless systems of support across the day and year.



Program Spotlight: West Central Community Center in Spokane

Located in one of the highest poverty communities in Washington State, West Central Community Center (WCCC) serves a critical role supporting children and families in the West Central and Emerson Garfield neighborhoods of Spokane.

Through their youth development program, which includes before and afterschool, and summer programming, WCCC provides a variety of enrichment and experiential programming from clubs and sports to arts and crafts, educational support, life skills and drug and alcohol prevention. The staff pride themselves on being positive role models and making a lasting impression on the youth who participate.

This year, WCCC joined a cohort of organizations in Spokane County taking part in the Expanded Learning Opportunities Quality Initiative. Though familiar with SOWA's trainings and professional development services, Rick Harris, Recreation and Facility Manager, felt a little hesitant at first about the commitment involved in the year-long quality improvement process.

After conversations with Benjamin Baird, SOWA's Spokane Program Quality Manager, Rick and Felicia Parke, who leads the youth development programs, were convinced this was something they wanted to be a part of, recognizing the potential benefits for the staff, youth, and families.



"I've discovered that being a part of this quality improvement process takes a little pressure off supervisors because we have experts from the outside coming in, teaching, evaluating, guiding, and mentoring," explains Rick Harris. "It's an eye opening experience having that outside perspective and we are excited to see how our staff will improve their interactions with the kids in our program."

The first step of the process includes an assessment which provided clarity for WCCC staff around areas to work on when it comes to improving youth interaction and youth engagement. Now the staff are receiving ongoing coaching and training to work toward the goals they developed with guidance and support from School's Out Washington.

"Maybe it's getting on the same eye level as the kids when they speak, but just that simple guidance from experts around these small changes can lead to a more positive and supportive environment."

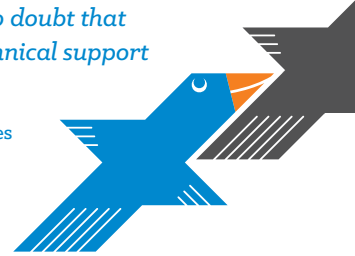
"We're excited to see how this process helps staff understand ways to help youth feel more connected," explains Felicia Parke. **"Maybe it's getting on the same eye level as the kids when they speak, but just that simple guidance from experts around these small changes can lead to a more positive and supportive environment."**





“This investment will allow our partnership with the YMCA, Somali Youth & Family Club, and Coalition of Refugees from Burma to address social justice and equity disparities that hinder economically disadvantaged youth from being successful in school while building confidence and resiliency. Although this project is just launching, there is no doubt that SOWA is well equipped and ready to provide high-level technical support to help us all be successful in our goals.”

– Michael Heinisch, Executive Director, Kent Youth & Family Services



Opportunities Rising through Grantmaking

Grantmaking comprises one of SOWA's key strategies to build capacity in communities across Washington State to deliver quality afterschool and summer learning programs.

In 2017, SOWA expanded this role through a partnership with King County's Best Starts for Kids. SOWA was selected to administer the Quality Out-of-School Time investment area based on our long record of accomplishments in promoting high-quality and culturally-responsive practices in expanded learning.





This past December, Best Starts and SOWA awarded 19 grants totaling \$8.3 million in funding over 3 years reaching elementary and middle school youth predominantly from low-income communities and communities of color. Awardees include single organizations and partnerships representing 32 organizations across King County.



The investment includes a two-pronged strategy: investing in a partnership of organizations working together to serve youth within a school or housing community; and supporting organizations led by and serving people of color to increase their capacity to serve more youth with high-quality, impactful services. The selected organizations will also engage in SOWA's quality improvement process. SOWA and Best Starts for Kids will work together to evaluate the Quality Out-of-School Time investment to better understand the effectiveness of this model in supporting programs and in achieving youth outcomes.

LOOKING FORWARD

SOWA is working to leverage the initial Best Starts for Kids Quality Out-of-School Time investment to secure additional funding for more young people across King County to access quality afterschool and summer learning opportunities. A landscape scan conducted in 2017 on the current supply of programs revealed many gaps across King County when it comes to availability of quality programming. With additional funding, SOWA will make great strides in further advancing a system of supports for young people beyond the school day.






Youth Leaders: A Rising Voice for Expanded Learning




Youth-driven programs center youth voice and operate from the understanding that to reach outcomes and have a positive impact, **youth need to feel that they are valued by program staff and a part of shaping their learning experience.**

A new Youth Afterschool Ambassadors initiative launched this year by our national partners at the Afterschool Alliance, elevated the voice and leadership of two Washington youth. Ruben Balderas of Walla Walla and Marisol Romero of Toppenish are both involved in 21st Century Community Learning Center programs engaged in SOWA's network and proud representatives on the national stage on behalf of expanded learning.




"When I first moved to Walla Walla, it was hard to fit in. I found a video editing afterschool program that sounded interesting and started going to every program I could. In this program, I learned how to be a leader and how to take action. I also made a lot of friends who I know now I can always fall back on. This program made me want to become a teacher and be able to help other kids like me."

– **Ruben Balderas**, a Senior at Walla Walla High School and active participant of WaHI FORWARD Afterschool Program



"Going to my afterschool program has influenced me to open my own community center after high school. I know from my experience going to my program that having someone care and believe in you is the best thing a kid can have, and I want to be able to give back and provide that to my community."

– **Marisol Romero**, a Junior at Toppenish High School and active participant at Northwest Community Action Center's Safe Haven Community Center



Ruben and Marisol spoke at an Expanded Learning Advocacy Day in Olympia during the 2018 legislative session on the importance of their afterschool program in supporting development of interests and new skills. They took their message to Washington DC this spring, meeting with Congressional leaders and advocating for continued funding and support for programs.



Ruben Balderas,
Youth Leader



Marisol Romero,
Youth Leader



Our Impact in 2017

Best Starts for Kids Quality Out-of-School Time Investment (Grant period 2018-2021)

19 projects supporting **32 organizations** to increase access to quality expanded learning programs in underserved communities and geographies.

\$8.3 Million

AWARDED

2016-2017 Refugee School Impact Project

10 grants to school districts and community-based partners to support refugee students and families.

\$481,000

AWARDED

801

YOUTH IMPACTED

2017 Feed Your Brain

11 grants to high-poverty, rural communities to provide summer learning opportunities and nutritious meals to children and youth.

\$46,880

AWARDED

1,644

YOUTH IMPACTED



2,792

TOTAL COACHING AND
TRAINING HOURS

664

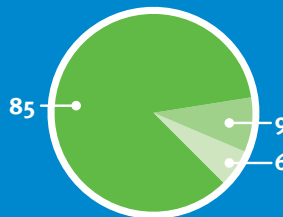
TOTAL PROGRAMS
IMPACTED

1,909

NUMBER OF ADULTS
TRAINED

94,000

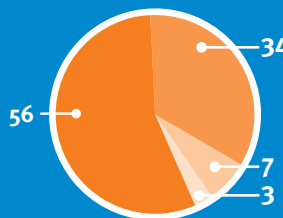
WASHINGTON YOUTH IMPACTED
THROUGH OUR SERVICES



EXPENDITURES

\$5,102,649

85% Program
9% General Administration
6% Fundraising



INCOME

\$6,552,187

56% Foundation Grants
34% Government Grants
7% Earned Income
3% Individual and Corporations

*These figures are excerpted from our
2017 Audited Financial Statements,
provided by Peterson Sullivan, LLP.*



Thank You!

Acknowledgments

The Board of Directors of School's Out Washington wishes to thank and acknowledge the following donors for their gift(s) during the 2017 fiscal year, January 1 – December 31, 2017. We apologize for any omissions or errors.

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Middle school youth from five summer programs participated in Zero Robotics, a program created by MIT and NASA and coordinated in Washington by SOWA, designed to allow low-income youth, youth of color, and girls to see themselves in STEM careers and experience a summer "space camp" free of charge.



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1 **NEW!** Attend **Elevate Opportunity**, a luncheon to celebrate expanded learning on **October 30, 2018**

2 **Connect** with us online **@SchoolsOutWA**



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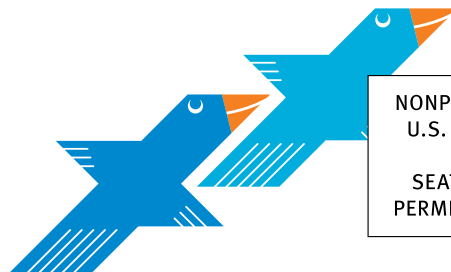
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